तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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Vision of Vrindavan

A Remembrance of Srila Prabhupada

"But why is it, Srila Prabhupada, that here in Vrindavan, Krishna's devotees also seem to suffer so?" Gurudas asks.

"Suffer? What is that suffering?" Prabhupada says.

"Many don't have sufficient food. They sleep on the streets and ..."

"Who says there's not sufficient food? Is anyone starving? Just show me one starving man. In any temple a man can go and take *prasādam*. And as for sleeping, everyone is sleeping. When you sleep, do you know whether you're on a king's couch or a stone road? The Goswamis would sleep under a different tree every night, and then for only two or three hours. There's no problem eating, sleeping, defending, mating. There's no lack there, no poverty. The only poverty in India today is lack of Krishna consciousness — that's all."

"But most tourists are appalled when they come here and see the conditions," Dr. Kapoor says. He is dressed in a spotless white kurta and pajama pants. "It will take more than your temple at Raman Reti to change all that."

"Therefore I'm recommending a general program of clean-up, preservation, and restoration," Prabhupada says. "True, the beautiful temples of the Goswamis — Madana Mohana, Govindaji, especially — are crumbling due to neglect."

"Sometimes people even use them as stone quarries," Dr. Kapoor laments.

"So, we must first protect them. Then restore them to first-class condition, install deities, and conduct daily *āratis*. Then many people will come and benefit."

"Why has Krishna allowed His *dhāma* to deteriorate, Srila Prabhupada?" Gurudas asks.

"It has not deteriorated," he replies.

"Well, you just said that the Goswami temples were neglected."

"That's a fact. But Vrindavan has not deteriorated."

"Most Americans would be shocked to see what I saw this morning," I say.

"How's that?" Prabhupada asks.

"Well, for one, they'd consider it unhygenic."

"Just see. For a materialist, everything is topsy-turvy because his vision is perverted. Beauty and ugliness are in the eye of the seer."

"But what's this veneer covering the holy *dhāma*?"

"The ugliness that you see here is *yoga-māyā*," Prabhupada says. "It's Krishna's covering. Vrindavan appears this way to drive away the atheists and impersonalists, just as New York attracts them. For a devotee, this Vrindavan is as good as Krishna's transcendental abode in the spiritual sky — Goloka Vrindavan. But you must have the eyes to see."

"Transcendental vision," Dr. Kapoor says.

"Yes, Vrindavan hides herself from the materialist," Prabhupada says.

"You speak of Vrindavan as a person," I say.

"In spiritual consciousness, everything

next column ☞

is personal," Prabhupada says. "Even the city of Ravana appeared before Hanuman as a gigantic Rakshashi, and Hanuman knocked her down because she challenged him."

"Well, I've certainly noticed a difference between the consciousness of Delhi and here," I say. "I couldn't help but feel it. Still, the poverty ... "

"Krishna's mercy keeps his devotees poor," Prabhupada says. "Their only wealth is Krishna consciousness. Krishna doesn't want them diverted by Maya Devi."

"But I still don't see how this is as good as Goloka Vrindavan," I say.

"Then you must try to rediscover Vrindavan," Prabhupada says. "That you must do. It is a question of consciousness. The real Vrindavan is there in your own heart, hiding herself from you."

"So how do I go about it?" I ask.

"Just follow the examples of the elevated *vraja-vāsīs*," he says, smiling. "For instance, the *gopīs*, the milkmaids of Vrindavan, simply tried to make Krishna happy. That is Krishna consciousness: making Krishna happy. When you love someone, you want to make him happy, right?"

"Right."

"In Vrindavan, everyone is trying to please Krishna: the birds, trees, cows, the river, and all Krishna's associates. It's not that Vrindavan is only here. We can have Vrindavan everywhere. Krishna is not limited. We should not think that because Krishna is far away in Goloka Vrindavan he cannot accept what we offer him. If you offer food with love, Krishna eats. Krishna does not leave Goloka Vrindavan, but his expansion goes and accepts food. This Vrindavan that just happens to appear in India is as worshipable as Krishna. So we cannot offend his *dhāma*, his home. If we live in Vrindavan, we are living with Krishna, because Vrindavan is non-different from Krishna. There's no difference between the original Vrindavan and this Vrindavan. Vrindavan is so powerful."

— Pages 48-51. *Vrindavan Days*. By Howard Wheeler, (Hayagriva Swami). Palace Publishing. New Vrindavan, West Virginia. 1990.

Bhugarbha Goswami

Prema-vilāsa 7.220–32

kibā gosvamīra sneha! kahite ke pare?
śrī kṛṣṇa caitanya samarpilena savāre

How great was Bhugarbha Goswami's love! Who has the power to describe it? He surrendered everything to Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

— Srila Narahari Chakravarti's *Bhakti-ratnākara* 6.396.

kṛpāmaya bhugarbha gosvāmī kṛpā kari'
punaḥ ki āniba mo pāpīra keśa dhari'

Will merciful Bhugarbha Goswami kindly grab sinful me by the hair and drag me back to Vraja?

— *Bhakti-ratnākara* 6.478.

jaya raghunātha bhaṭṭa, sanātana, rūpa
jaya śrī bhūgarbha, lokanātha bhakti-bhūpa

Glory to Raghunath Bhatta, Sanatan Goswami, and Rupa Goswami! Glory to Sri Bhugarbha and Lokanath, the great monarchs of *bhakti!*

— *Bhakti-ratnākara* 15.7

Gaudiya Vaishnava literature discusses very little about Srila Bhugarbha Goswami. It's known that he was a close friend of Srila Lokanath Goswami and that they both lived in Vraja on the order of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Lokanath and Bhugarbha are said to have been so close that the two were actually one, only their bodies were different. In text 187 of Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā, *Srila Kavi Karnapur describes,* bhūgarbha-ṭhakkurasyāsīt pūrvākhyā prema-mañjarī — *in kṛṣṇa-līlā, Bhugarbha Goswami was previously Sri Prema Manjari. Radha Krishna Das Goswami writes in* Sādhana-dīpikā *(8.214) that Lokanath Goswami was the son of Bhugarbha's brother.*

*Srila Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami writes (*Cc. ādi *8.68) that Bhugarbha Goswami was a disciple of Gadadhar Pandit. The verse following that describes that among Bhugarbha Goswami's disciples were Chaitanya Das, a priest of the Govinda deity, as well as Mukundananda Chakravarti and the great devotee Krishnadas. In* ādi *12.82, Kaviraj Goswami says that Bhugarbha is the 12th branch of the tree of Gadadhar Pandit. As they were senior by age and experience to many of the vaiṣṇavas in Vrindavan, Bhugarbha and Lokanath Goswamis were regarded among the principal gosvāmīs of Vraja. Bhugarbha Goswami was an intimate associate of Rupa and Sanatan, and on the order of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu he moved to Vrindavan where he spent the rest of his life engaged in* bhajan *and revealing and excavating the places of Krishna's pastimes.*

The following story is from Prema-vilāsa *by Nityananda Das, the disciple of Jahnava Mata, the divine consort of Lord Nityananda Prabhu. Jahnava related to Nityananda Das many stories from the lives of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and his associates. On her order, he compiled those*

stories into the book known as Prema-vilāsa. *The following translation describes something of the activities of Srila Bhugarbha Goswami.*

"Go to Vrindavan"

One day, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu called for Lokanath Goswami and instructed him, "Please go to Vrindavan to satisfy me. You should start at once and travel through Girikunda, Govardhan, Yavat, Barshana, and various solitary *kuñjas,* and be happy to live in those places. Go to your original home and worship the feet of Kishore Kishori. Build a cottage at Chira Ghat and at the Rasasthali [the place of the *rāsa* dance], which is surrounded by trees like Tamal, Bakul and Vata. Visit Vamsivat, Nidhuvan, and take rest in Dhir Samir. Bathe in the Yamuna and live on *ajācaka-bhikṣyā* — alms that come without asking. Continue your chanting and remembrance, and teach the living entities about Krishna. As an accomplished devotee, you will get numerous disciples. Rupa and others will join you later."

When they met the following morning, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu again instructed Lokanath to go to Vrindavan, and embraced him lovingly. When Lokanath fell at his feet, Mahaprabhu placed his foot on his head. Holding Lokanath's hands, the Lord began to cry. Mahaprabhu said, "I have given my own Vrindavan to you." Lokanath also shed tears like torrents of rain. Only a loving master and his faithful servant can realize the meaning of this crying.

Gadadhar Pandit and his disciple Bhugarbha were also present at that time. Bhugarbha eagerly approached his guru and requested, "Please be kind and allow me to go to Vrindavan. This has been my long-cherished desire." Hearing this, Mahaprabhu said, "Gadai, permit him to go with Lokanath."

Gadadhar consented, saying, "Go happily with Lokanath and travel the whole way discussing *kṛṣṇa-līlā*." The devotees joyfully shouted out the names of Hari, as Lokanath and Bhugarbha bowed at the feet of Mahaprabhu and Gadadhar Pandit. Although the Lord had given the order, when Lokanath left for Vrindavan, Mahaprabhu began to cry helplessly and Gadadhar Pandit cried for his Bhugarbha.

Lokanath and Bhugarbha traveled happily, deeply absorbed in thoughts of Gauranga. Sometimes they fell to the ground in ecstatic love, sometimes they loudly sang the glories of Krishna, and other times they sang the glories of Gauranga. In this way they gradually reached the town of Rajmahala. At this point they were uncertain which way to go. They inquired from some passersby, who advised that they not go to Vrindavan as the roads leading there were filled with notorious dacoits. Worried that they would never reach Vrindavan, they decided to go in the direction of Tajpura. Eventually they arrived at the village of Puraria, and shortly thereafter reached Ayodhya. Although the journey had gone well so far, they were frightened that they would not be able to fulfill the Lord's order to go to Vrindavan. Nevertheless, they continued. Eventually they arrived in Lucknow, and on the twenty-third day they reached Agra. There they took bath in the Yamuna and accepted some *prasādam*. Two days later they entered Gokul and visited the birthplace of Krishna. Finally, on the following day, they reached Vrindavan.

Now I shall explain something wonderful. Gadadhar Pandit Goswami, the favorite follower of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, was the incarnation of Srimati Radharani. In his previous life Bhugarbha Mahasaya was Nandimukhi [see above for Kavi Karnapur's description of Bhugarbha Goswami's identity in *kṛṣṇa-līlā*]. Nandimukhi is close friends with Manjulali [Lokanath's identity in *kṛṣṇa-līlā*. Again Kavi Karnapur gives a different description. In *Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā* 187, He says that Lokanath is the incarnation of Lila Manjari]. Chaitanya-chandra, the only master of the universe and the wish-fulfilling tree of all His devotees, understood this very well.

Lokanath and Bhugarbha traveled throughout the abode of Vraja, sometimes rolling on the ground in ecstasy. They observed the beauty of Govardhan and from there went to Yavat, the abode of Sri Radhika, and visited all the places where the *sakhīs* used to perform their pastimes. From there they went to the house of Nanda Maharaja, and then to Sanket Kunj. There, Lokanath took the hands of Bhugarbha and asked him to describe the *līlās* which had taken place there. Relishing the pastimes of the Lord, they both began to cry out the name of Radha, oblivious to everything else. Thus they decided to halt there for a day. The local residents received them warmly and brought them delicious foodstuffs.

The next day was spent absorbed in ecstatic love on the hill of Barshana. In the morning

they took their baths in the lake and then circumambulated Barshana. They decided to stay there that day and were served with great care by the local residents. Next, they visited Kali Ghat, Nidhuvan, and Rasasthali. When they arrived at Chira Ghat they were overwhelmed by the beauty of the forest. They began to search for a proper place there to build a hut, and at last found an appropriate tree.

After settling in, Lokanath told Bhugarbha, "I am certain that there is no hope of ever seeing Chaitanya Mahaprabhu again. Prabhu has sent us here, depriving us of the opportunity to observe his pastimes with his devotees." In lamentation he called out, "Oh my Lord! When will I have the fortune of seeing the lotus feet of Rupa and Sanatan?" Both of them began to wait eagerly for the moment when they would meet the two brothers.

Word quickly spread throughout Vraja about the arrival of two *brāhmaṇas*. Struck by the beauty and disposition of Lokanath and Bhugarbha, the residents did not regard them as ordinary men. The *vrajavāsīs* commented that these two *brahmacārīs* were extremely polished and polite. Equal to all persons, they advised everyone to worship Krishna with devotion. When Lokanath and Bhugarbha went to Dhira Samir Ghat and the people saw the sacred threads on their shoulders and the bodily beauty of the two *brahmacārīs*, which was equal to that of Cupid, they thought, "We have never seen anyone like this. Are they demigods or Gandharvas?" Thus their glories spread far and wide, and people, even from distant places, brought different varieties of *prasādam* for the two friends. In this way they became the life of the residents of Vraja. Completely indifferent to the material world, Lokanath and Bhugarbha lived a secluded life in Sri Vrindavan Dham.

I am incapable of completely describing the glories of Lokanath and Bhugarbha. I am simply trying to execute the order of Sri Jahnava and Birachandra. When Jahnava went to Vrindavan, I accompanied her, along with my brother Ramachandra Das and other *vaiṣṇavas*. Thus I had the opportunity to witness many pastimes with my own eyes. There Isvari met Sri Rupa and other Goswamis. Keeping faith in the lotus feet of Sri Jahnava and Birachandra, I, Nityananda Das, write *Prema-vilāsa*.

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In Vaishnava Digdarsini, *Murarilala Adhikari estimates that Bhugarbha and Lokanath Goswami's left for Vrindavan in 1509 AD and arrived there in 1510. Bhugarbha Goswami's disappearance is on the 14th day of the bright part of the month of* Kārtika. *His* samādhi *is in Vrindavan in the courtyard of the Radha Damodar temple, near to Rupa Goswami's.*

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